

Funds Advance for Local Law Enforcement

Washington – Congressman Alan B. Mollohan announced that he included 11 separate grants in an appropriations bill to help local law enforcement agencies across the First Congressional District finance important equipment upgrades and improve interoperability.

“Making sure that local law enforcement officers have the tools they need to do their job effectively and safely has always been one of my top priorities,” Mollohan said. “These men and women have a difficult job on the best of days, and I am proud to support their terrific work.”

The grants are part of the Justice Department’s Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, which offers financial and technical resources to local law enforcement departments across the country. COPS grants can be used to purchase a wide range of equipment necessary for modern law enforcement and are particularly valuable to smaller departments found in West Virginia and other less-populated states.

Mollohan’s bill includes grants for the following departments:

â—• Clarksburg Police - \$100,000

â—• Fairmont Police - \$50,000

â—• Granville Police - \$50,000

â—• Keyser Police - \$50,000

â—• Mineral County Sheriff - \$50,000

â—• Morgantown Police - \$250,000

â—• Parkersburg Police - \$100,000

â—• Rivesville Police - \$50,000

â—• Terra Alta Police - \$50,000

â—• Triadelphia Police - \$50,000

â—• Wheeling Police - \$50,000

The largest grant, \$250,000, will be used for the Monongalia County Interoperability and Computer-Aided Dispatch initiative. The project is coordinated by the Morgantown Police Department and will enable officers in the field to instantly access criminal records and share photographs and fingerprints in real time with all participating departments.

“This is very good news,” said Morgantown Police Chief Phil Scott. “This project will benefit the entire county, and we certainly appreciate Congressman Mollohan’s ongoing support.” Mollohan secured \$282,000 for the project in 2008.

Other law enforcement participating in the project include the Granville Police, the Star City Police, the Westover Police, the West Virginia University Police, the Monongalia County Sheriff’s Department, the Monongalia County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, the Monongalia County Magistrate’s Court, and MECCA 911.

The other grant recipients have identified a range of equipment needs that will be met by the funding. “We couldn’t be more pleased with this news,” said Keyser Police Chief Karen Shoemaker. “Congressman Mollohan has always been a big advocate for us. He has brought small police departments like ours into the new century.”

Although violent crime nationwide has been decreasing over the last several years, it has been on the upswing in some smaller communities and rural areas. The FBI’s Preliminary Annual Crime Report for 2009, released in May, showed that the murder rate increased by 5.3 percent in cities with 25,000 to 49,999 inhabitants and by 1.8 percent in nonmetropolitan counties.

Mollohan chairs the Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations Subcommittee, which drafted its fiscal year 2011 spending bill last month. The COPS grants are included in the draft. The legislation must be approved by the House and Senate and signed into law before any funding can be delivered.

Over the past five years, Mollohan has delivered more than \$5 million for law enforcement agencies across West Virginia's First Congressional District.

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